



*Episcopal Diocese
of Vermont*

*Companion Ministry
Program*

Training Outline

COMPANION MINISTRY PROGRAM

With Gratitude...

...to our colleagues in the Scottish Episcopal Church who shared their experiences of Local Collaborative Ministry and the Mentor Training Program they now offer. Our Companion Program would not be as fine without this marvelous relationship between Vermont and Scotland.

...to the Roanridge Trust of the Episcopal Church whose financial support and encouragement helped begin the Program.

Program Summary

The Companion Ministry Program of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont is based on the theological principles found in the Baptismal Covenant. Companion Ministry encourages and supports a shared ministry for mission that calls all baptized Christians to be ministers of God's reconciling love in the world.

Companions in the Diocese of Vermont walk alongside a congregation as partners in a relationship designed to expand the ministry of the Diocese to congregations and to offer an incarnation of Baptismal Ministry as they demonstrate their own ministry as baptized persons and celebrate the ministry of others.

The Diocese believes the Companion Ministry Program has the potential to lead to

- congregations which are strengthened in their understanding of baptismal theology as a basis for mission in the wider community and
- individual members who have a deeper knowledge and understanding of the baptismal covenant and how it forms their lives not only as active members of the Church but also as Christ's representatives in the world.

Companions in Vermont ...

- work with congregations as they move through transitions of clergy leadership,
- further enhance and support all leadership within the congregations,
- assist congregations in discerning and forming local ministry support teams emerging from practices of baptismal ministry,
- guide and support congregation members as they develop connections between baptismal ministries and the ways of living daily life outside of the public church setting.

The following outline portrays the initial training sessions of the Companions over a period of several months. There were five initial sessions, followed by an intensive training conference, and then a wrap-up session. The conference was not created for the Companion Program; rather, it was an event sponsored by Deployment and Transition Officers in the New England dioceses. We took advantage of it for the Companion Program since the topics were appropriate. Without the conference, we would have designed two or three other sessions, totaling eight or nine.

The sessions focused on the following aspects:¹

the **context** in which Companions operate:

- a description of Baptismal Living and Ministry within the Diocese of Vermont
- the diocesan organization and where Companions find themselves
- the local needs of congregations as they transform to new ways of being “church”

the **role** of the Companion:

- boundaries, expectations, and relationships with diocesan colleagues
- the work of Companions as “accompaniers” and “facilitators”

the **charisms** of the Companion:

- gifts a Companion is expected to display
- the ways to build upon these God-given talents

the **work** of the Companion:

- clarification of the situations within congregations
- tools and resources to use

the **support** and **accountability** of the Companion:

- the colleagues in our work—Ministry Developers, Interim Pastors, the Bishop
- peer meetings and review

The content of the training sessions has been offered in a variety of ways:

- through formal input, such as lecturettes and presentations
- by the sharing of case studies
- and by the use of interactive techniques such as small group work and role playing.

Worship and Bible studies have been foundational in all sessions. They have taken a variety of forms and serve not only to form the group but also to model some tools and resources which the Companions may then use in their work.

¹ Based on Tomlinson, Anne. “Mentor Training in the Scottish Episcopal Church—A History of Developments,” 2007. Scottish Episcopal Church document.

These trainings have provided more formalization of the role and ministry of a Companion, but as with everything in the field of ministry development, this is a work in progress, unfolding and evolving as experience and need suggest.

Session 1 Introduction to the Companion Ministry

Presented by Susan Ohlidal, Ministry Developer, Diocese of Vermont

Supplies needed: *name tags, Bible passages, Women's Uncommon Prayers, easel, markers, stickies, laptop and projector, copies of Kujawa Holbrook article, copies of "About Baptismal Ministry in the Diocese of Vermont"*

11 AM Welcome and Short Intro's

Welcome, names & places, building lay out, lunch
What the day will look like—outline, expectations

11:10 AM Prayer and Bible Study

Prayer—Women's Uncommon Prayers, p. 31
Bible -- Mark 10: 35-45; activity "Speed Bible Study"
Questions: Someone you know who is a terrific leader
...a terrible leader
What does "servant" mean to you?
Today, who are you in this passage and why?

11:30 AM Who We Are and Why We Are Here

Hand out stickies and ask that questions be written as we go along, posting them for attention later

Why we are here?
Review "Profile" sent with application
Review "Companions in Context" (document)—structure/systems

12 Noon LUNCH

12:15 (over lunch) Baptismal Ministry in our Diocese
"Bap. Ministry in VT" document—hand it out
"Bap Min in VT"—PowerPoint presentation, slides 1-9, while eating lunch

What are we trying to do?

What are we trying to bring about?

1:15 What We Bring to the Table

What gifts/experiences/skills will we need?

Listening, accompaniment, confidentiality, clear boundaries, facilitation

What do we already have?

Why was I invited into this program? What do I have to offer?

1:30—2:45 PM

How will this REALLY work?

Training and Resources

Support Structures—these colleagues, Ministry Developers, the Bishop

Accountability—to each other, to Ministry Developers, to congregations

Letters of Agreement

Time Commitment

Review the Stickies—can we answer any of them yet?

Next meetings—calendar

2:45 Wrap up

Hand out Kujawa Holbrook article, “Calling All Believers”

(Congregations, Fall 2004)—read for next session

Hand out Companions Contact List

Closing Prayer

Women’s Uncommon, p. 244

3:00 PM End

Questions Companions had during this session:

Will we get to know each other?

What is the overall vision of this program?

What are the diocesan expectations...of the program?...of us?

How long have you been in Vermont?
When were you baptized?
When did you become active in the diocese? How?

1:30 PM “Oh, the Places We Will Go...”
Focus: boundaries and confidentiality issues

Case Study #1, St. Samantha’s

Who are players? Why?

What are response options...

On the phone initially?

After hanging up?

Why is this information important...or isn’t it?

Who can the Companion tell?...should tell...? Why or why not?

Next steps...?

Case Study #2, Diocesan Committee

What are response options...to Sheila?...to others?...

...to Ministry Developer?

Why is this important?...or isn’t it?

Next steps?

Summary

What is confidentiality?...vs. “secret”?

Why is it necessary in our work?

What are the limits

Someone in danger...self or other

What is the support?

Ministry Developer, Canon to the Ordinary, Bishop

2:30 Wrap-up

Review the Stickies—what can we answer?

Next meetings—calendar

Linda Grenz, systems and group dynamics

Tim Rich, leadership development

Tim Rich, conflict

How was this location?...future meetings?

Closing Prayer

Centering prayer and Taize hymn “Bless the lord my soul”

Write words on easel

3:00 PM End

*Questions Companions had during this session:
Can I really do this work?
How will I get paid and how much?*

St. Samantha of the Stone Wall

Companions case study #1

A large-size congregation in a tiny diocese, St. Samantha counts among her membership many strong leaders. There are a wide variety of active and vibrant committees and a full calendar of events each year. They have been working with a Ministry Developer for 10 months, developing ministry teams to replace the model of committees.

There is a full-time rector who has been there 13 years, an associate rector who was hired 3 years ago, and four other staff members—administrator, sexton, organist, and choir director. The senior warden has held this position for 10 years; his wife has been the chairperson of the “annual campaign” for the past 8 years. The pledges roll in: the campaigns are always successful in reaching the yearly goal.

A Companion is now scheduled to work with the Ministry Developer to set up a mutual ministry review. The Companion receives a phone call from the Senior Warden, regarding scheduling of this meeting. The senior warden tells the Companion he hopes the date will be soon because the “assistant rector is looking for a new job” and he would “like to have the review before the priest leaves.” The warden also shares that his wife learned the information from the parish treasurer.

What options does the Companion have with this new piece of information?

*Diocesan Committee on Discerning the Cup Half Full or Half Empty
Companions Case Study #2*

Betty is a member of the diocesan committee and is in the middle of her three-year term. At a recent meeting, one of Betty's colleagues on the committee was holding forth at lunch about her parish.

Sheila described how little money her parish has, how they cannot afford the repairs for the building, and how the current priest and wardens were "in cahoots," to get rid of the church secretary who has a 20 year tenure and still going strong, according to Sheila. The secretary is a "good friend" of Sheila. Sheila also described a diocesan person the priest is bringing in to help the parish...not a flattering picture! She described the last person "sent by the diocese" years ago and "what a disaster it was." Sheila was obviously very upset by the thought of her friend losing her church secretary job and not at all enthusiastic about the "diocesan person." Betty said nothing and only listened at the table while Sheila talked.

Following this committee meeting, Betty attended a Companions meeting. The Ministry Developer described a congregation that needed assistance...it was Sheila's! The Ministry Developer then asked which Companions may be interested in working with the Ministry Developer at this site.

What are Betty's choices in this situation?

Session 3 Systems Theory; Group Dynamics

Presented by Linda Grenz, LeaderResources

Opening Worship

10:00-10:45 PRESENTATION and DISCUSSION

- Family vs. Organizational Systems Theory
- Basics of OST
 - Five Disciplines
 - Personal Mastery (your vision, your reality and the choices you make)
 - Mental Models (becoming aware of the sources of our thinking)
 - Shared Vision (fostering commitment to a common purpose)
 - Team Learning (developing collective thinking skills and dialogue)
 - Systems Thinking (developing an awareness of complexity, interdependence, change and leverage)
 - Events (What happened?)
 - Patterns and Trends (What's been happening? Have we been here or some place similar before?)
 - Systemic Structures (What are the forces at play contributing to these patterns?)
 - Mental Models (What about our thinking allows this situation to persist?)
 - Tools of Systems Thinking
 - Reinforcing Processes: When small changes become big
 - Balancing Processes: Pushing stability and resistance
 - Causal-loop Processes
 - Stock-and-Flow Diagrams
 - Delays
 - The Learning Wheel
 - Observe
 - Reflect: Reconsider – reconnect – reframe
 - Decide
 - Do

10:45- 11:00 BREAK

11:00-12:00 APPLICATION

- Examples of concepts in congregational life
 - Budget and church: growth loop
 - Conflicted churches: rebalance loop
 - St. J's conflict: reframing
- How to assess a system
 - Using systems thinking in a consultative mode
 - Using systems thinking tools
- How to intervene
 - Teaching model: helping group members acquire and use tools
 - Consultant as systems intervention

12:00-1:00 LUNCH & Discussion:

- How do we see using system theory in our work?
- Q & A for Linda and others familiar with systems theory

GROUP DYNAMICS

1:00-1:20

- Stages of group life
 - Forming, storming, norming, performing
 - What leaders can do to help or block movement from one stage to another (brainstorm lists)

1:20-2:00

- Giving and receiving feedback
 - "I" messages
 - Practice: role play in triads

2:00-2:15

- Projection
 - How to recognize
 - Dangers of getting "caught"
 - How to handle: discussion (role play if desired)

2:15-2:30

- Communication
 - Need to hear it 3 times/7 times
 - Attention span (13 min. to 7; 10 sec. to 3)
 - Active Listening: review handout (role play if desired)

2:30-2:45 BREAK

2:45-3:45

- Sources and uses of power
 - Review of handout
 - Brainstorm our sources as consultants
 - Discuss: how we can use or abuse power
 - How to respond to other's misuse/abuse of power: role play
 - How to empower others: role play

3:45

- Evaluate, plan for next steps and closure
- Closing Worship

4:00 PM End

Sessions 4 and 5 Leadership Development

Presented by Tim Rich, Canon to the Ordinary, Diocese of NH

11 AM—4 PM, over two days

- I. Welcome and Getting to Know You
 - *introductions
 - *speed dating for leaders

- II. Some Basic Definitions
 - *leadership vs. management
 - *knowing the source of leadership authority

- III. Understanding Leadership
 - *naming your role models/knowing their gifts
 - *the qualities of an effective leader
 - *the task of an effective leader

- IV. Leadership for Today—considering the context of...
 - *... today's people (What are the societal challenges that provide a backdrop for our churches?)
 - *... today's congregations (What are the challenges facing our congregations?)
 - *2 models for considering the interrelationship between context and tasks
 1. Peter Steinke's Model of Influence
 2. Ronald Heifetz's Technical vs. Adaptive Situations

- V. Understanding Your Own Leadership Style
 - * Some role playing and case studies

- VI. Developing the Leaders Around You

** *The two sessions will be punctuated with prayers and worship at the beginning, middle and end.*

3-Day Training Conference

Effective Tools and Skills for Diocesan Consultants

A Project of the Episcopal Dioceses of New England

Led by Ann Holtz, national consultant

Concepts included:

- **Group Development Theory** – Inclusion, Control and Openness (work of Will Shutz), understanding the critical nature of community building
- **Role of a Consultant** – process expert, what do you bring – what do the clients bring, role as change agent with no power in the system, the unique nature of consulting in the church, the contracting process
- **Understanding self in group** – separating your stuff from their stuff, understanding your own buttons, understanding your own reactivity (work of Virginia Satire and Miller/Nunnally/Wackman/Saline), separating behavior description from judgment
- **Helping groups navigate through transitions** – Consultants are called in at times of change (or when pain is high and change is necessary). Explore the difference between change and transition. Investigate the needs of individuals and groups to move through the stages of transition. Understanding that transition is an individual process (work of William Bridges, Debra Farrington and Sue Monk Kidd)
- **Inviting God in as the true change agent** – introducing and exploring ways that you can lead clients into a more discerning process. How do you help them invite God in? Helping groups establish practices of prayer, silence and patience (work of Debra Farrington and Morris/Olsen and William Barry)

Methodology

- Lecturettes
- Experiential learning, utilizing EIAG methodology (experience, identify, analyze, generalize)
- Mutual sharing of successes and not so successes (assumption that there is a great deal of knowledge in the group)

About Ann Holtz...

Ann spent 16 years in the corporate world in many different management and staff capacities. In all areas of work she focused on changing human systems. She worked for the Episcopal Church Foundation as the national coordinator for Fresh Start, a resource for clergy and congregations in transition. In her work with the Foundation, Ann had a lead role in the development of a new resource for Mutual Ministry Reviews. She has extensive experience in leading retreats, developing and implementing training programs, and facilitating intact work groups and teams. Ann has a masters degree in Applied Behavioral Science.

Final Training Session Wrap-up of Initial Training Phase

Presented by Susan Ohlidal and Companions

This session was more casual and held in a retreat center.

11 AM

Opening Worship

Review of Where We Have Been

 What we have learned

Lunch—brief break

Discernment about this ministry

 Bible study—1 Cor. 1: 4-7 using *Gospel-based Discipleship* method

 What is God calling you to do? ...be a Companion?

 Saying farewell (if some leave group)

 Future formation

What More...?

 What questions do we have?

 Let's Make a Plan --what we do next

 Meeting with the Interim Pastors

Our Calendar

 Our future meetings

 Location possibilities

Closing Worship